

Something New on Crosby Drive

October 21, 2015

By Alyssa Sandoval, Economic Development Coordinator

Bedford's Crosby Drive is one of the largest business districts in Bedford, hosting about 2 million square feet of office and industrial space and featuring leading companies in Massachusetts, such as iRobot, Aspen Technology, Interactive Data, Oracle, the MITRE Corporation, as well as a great number of startups and other technology companies. The properties along this stretch of road alone provide the community with a significant commercial tax base. For two consecutive years, companies on Crosby Drive have received the highly prestigious Massachusetts Economic Impact Award for contributions to the state and our local economy; a Bronze-level award for Entegris in 2014 and a Gold-level award for Aspen Technology in 2015.

As I began my position in Bedford over a year ago, I closely reviewed the recently adopted Town of Bedford 2015 Master Plan, which provided a great overview of Economic Development in Bedford as well as key Economic Development goals, including a greater engagement with our large employers.

I began meeting with companies and business park owners on Crosby Drive last fall. We discussed some of the strengths of the business district as well as some of its weaknesses. One of the strengths most people noted were the great diversity of companies in the district, companies specializing in biotech to robotics to cyber security had made Bedford home. One of the weaknesses noted by many was the lack of quick public transit to the area from Boston and Cambridge. We also discussed ways that we could better collaborate between the Town and the businesses. While discussion is great, it is even better when those discussions result in something tangible.

We have tackled two initiatives since our first meetings just over a year ago. The first is a transportation initiative to improve transportation options to the area. With the help and leadership of the Middlesex 3 Coalition, we have seen the creation of a new Transportation Management Association aimed at providing better alternative transportation for employees and a new commuter shuttle from Alewife directly to Crosby Drive. The shuttle has grown exponentially in popularity in less than a year. From just

over 20 daily riders in December 2014 to 50 daily riders today. Possibilities for the shuttle are even greater as other companies on Crosby Drive seeking to recruit a greater proportion of the millennial workforce are now also looking at joining the shuttle service.



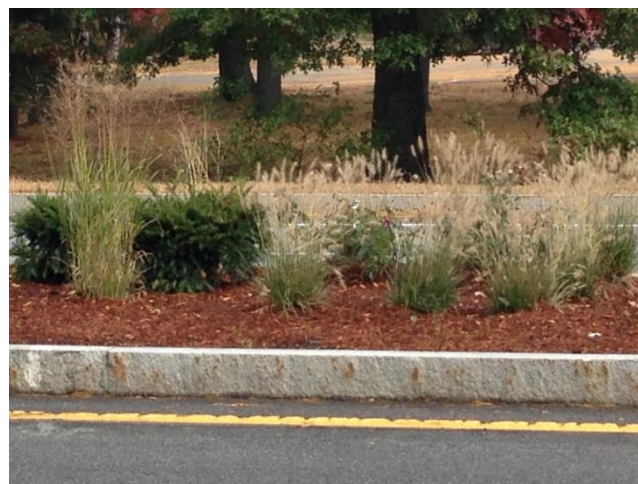
Middlesex 3 Coalition Shuttle to Crosby Drive

Another initiative we collaborated on was a project to install new landscaping in the three medians along Crosby Drive. Like medians in many business districts, they had been installed with grass and small trees initially but, without regular watering from a sprinkler system, had fallen into poor shape. National Development, the owner of the Crosby Corporate Center business park, took the lead in designing a landscape plan incorporating a series of beautiful but drought and salt-tolerant plant species.



Crosby Drive Landscape Design provided by Stantec & National Development

After several meetings with our Department of Public Works Director, Roy Sorenson, and three major property owners, we came up with a feasible plan for the medians. National Development, Jumbo Capital, and Davis Companies jointly contributed a total of \$18,000, which covered the cost of materials, such as sprinklers and plants. The Department of Public Works crew worked diligently over the summer, first installing the sprinkler system and loam in early fall and the plantings in September. The project not only beautifies the streetscape but also provides visual cues to drivers and pedestrians that create a sense of arrival to the Crosby Drive business district.



Hardy perennials to change with the seasons

Andrew Gallinaro, Vice President at National Development, is optimistic about future collaboration with the Town noting that “we are very pleased to have been able to participate in the Crosby Drive median improvement project. Not only has the landscaping upgrade been a real benefit to property owners on Crosby Drive and the general public alike but the process of working with the Town of Bedford could not have been better. Because of this experience, I am confident that we will continue to find ways to collaborate with the Town towards a positive outcome for all.”